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$14.9 Billion or Nothing. They Got Nothing.

■ Republicans on the House Ways and Means Committee were apoplectic last week over what they said was a vote by committee Democrats to spend $14.9 billion on nothing.

Seems the Democrats, led by Reps. **Sander M. Levin** (Mich.) and **Richard E. Neal** (Mass.) had some amendments to the Republican's "Contract With America" welfare reform package. The amendments involved work requirements and setting up jobs programs. The price tag on the amendment was $14.9 billion over five years.

The first amendment, to set up the programs, was defeated on a party-line vote, but the Democrats insisted on a second vote on the funding, even though there was nothing to fund.

Rep. **Mel Hancock** (R-Mo.) blasted the Democrats. "I guess they will vote to spend money on anything." The Democrats insisted the GOP bill still had a requirement that the states set up jobs programs and the money would have gone to help the states fund those programs.